WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image forming method for forming an image with an image recording apparatus including laser irradiation means for scan exposing, with a laser beam, a photothermographic material comprising a photosensitive silver halide, a non-photosensitive organic silver salt, a reducing agent and a binder on at least one surface of a support, and means for transporting the photothermographic material in a sub scanning direction and guiding it to a thermal developing portion, wherein:

1) the photothermographic material comprises at least one compound selected from compounds represented by the following formulae (1a), (1b) and (1c); and

2) a distance between a scanning exposure position of the laser irradiation means and an insertion part of the thermal developing portion is 50 cm or less:

Formula (1a)

$$R\text{-}Y_1\text{-}(L_1)_{n1}\text{-}CX_1X_2X_3$$

wherein, X_1, X_2 and X_3 each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a substituent, provided that at least one of X_1, X_2 and X_3 is a halogen atom; L_1 represents a sulfonyl group; n1 represents 0 or 1; Y_1 represents $-N(R_1)-$, a sulfur atom, an oxygen atom, a selenium atom, or $-(R_2)C=C(R_3)-$; R_1, R_2 and R_3 each independently

represent a hydrogen atom or a substituent; and R represents a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an aliphatic group, an aryl group or a heterocyclic group;

Formula (1b)

$R-Y_2-L_2-CX_1X_2X_3$

wherein, X_1, X_2 and X_3 each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a substituent, provided that at least one of X_1, X_2 and X_3 is a halogen atom; L_2 represents a carbonyl group or a sulfinyl group; Y_2 represents $-N(R_1)-$, a sulfur atom, an oxygen atom, a selenium atom, or $-(R_2)C=C(R_3)-$; R_1, R_2 and R_3 each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a substituent; and R represents a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an aliphatic group, an aryl group or a heterocyclic group; and

Formula (1c)

$R-Y_3-(L_3)_{n2}-CX_1X_2X_3$

wherein, X_1, X_2 and X_3 each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a substituent, provided that at least one of X_1, X_2 and X_3 is a halogen atom; L_3 represents a sulfonyl group, a carbonyl group or a sulfinyl group; n2 represents 2 or 3; Y_3 represents a single bond, $-N(R_1)-$, a sulfur atom, an oxygen atom, a selenium atom, or $-(R_2)C=C(R_3)-$; R_1, R_2 and R_3 each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a substituent; and R represents a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an aliphatic group, an

aryl group or a heterocyclic group.

2. An image forming method according to claim 1, wherein R is an alkyl group.

3. An image forming method according to claim 1, wherein at least one of X_1, X_2 and X_3 is Br.

4. An image forming method according to claim 1, wherein Y_1 is -N(R_1)-.

5. An image forming method according to claim 4, wherein R_1 is an alkyl group.

6. An image forming method according to claim 1, wherein Y_2 is -N(R_1)-.

7. An image forming method according to claim 6, wherein R_1 is a hydrogen atom.

8. An image forming method according to claim 1, wherein Y_3 is a single bond.

9. An image forming method according to claim 1, wherein n2 represents 2.

10. An image forming method according to claim 1, wherein R and R_1, or R and R_3 form a ring.

11. An image forming method according to claim 10, wherein the ring is an alicyclic group.

12. An image forming method according to claim 1, wherein the distance between the scanning exposure position and the insertion part of the thermal developing portion is 45 cm or less.

13. An image forming method according to claim 1, wherein the photothermographic material has a silver coating amount of 1.9 g or less per 1 m^2 of the photothermographic material.

14. An image forming method according to claim 1, wherein thermal development is carried out for 6 seconds to 14 seconds.

15. An image forming method for forming an image with an image forming apparatus including an exposing portion which scan exposes, with a laser beam, a photothermographic material comprising a photosensitive silver halide, a non-photosensitive organic silver salt, a reducing agent and a binder on at least one surface of a support, and a thermal developing portion, wherein:

1) the photothermographic material comprises at least one compound selected from compounds represented by the following formulae (1a), (1b) and (1c); and

2) a line speed of the thermal development is 20 mm/sec or higher:

Formula (1a)

$$R\text{-}Y_1\text{-}(L_1)_{n1}\text{-}CX_1X_2X_3$$

wherein, X_1, X_2 and X_3 each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a substituent, provided that at least one of X_1, X_2 and X_3 is a halogen atom; L_1 represents a sulfonyl group; n1 represents 0 or 1; Y_1 represents -

$N(R_1)$-, a sulfur atom, an oxygen atom, a selenium atom, or $-(R_2)C=C(R_3)-$; R_1, R_2 and R_3 each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a substituent; and R represents a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an aliphatic group, an aryl group or a heterocyclic group;

Formula (1b)

$$R-Y_2-L_2-CX_1X_2X_3$$

wherein, X_1, X_2 and X_3 each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a substituent, provided that at least one of X_1, X_2 and X_3 is a halogen atom; L_2 represents a carbonyl group or a sulfinyl group; Y_2 represents $-N(R_1)-$, a sulfur atom, an oxygen atom, a selenium atom, or $-(R_2)C=C(R_3)-$; R_1, R_2 and R_3 each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a substituent; and R represents a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an aliphatic group, an aryl group or a heterocyclic group; and

Formula (1c)

$$R-Y_3-(L_3)_{n2}-CX_1X_2X_3$$

wherein, X_1, X_2 and X_3 each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a substituent, provided that at least one of X_1, X_2 and X_3 is a halogen atom; L_3 represents a sulfonyl group, a carbonyl group or a sulfinyl group; n2 represents 2 or 3; Y_3 represents a single bond, $-N(R_1)-$, a sulfur atom, an oxygen atom, a selenium atom, or $-(R_2)C=C(R_3)-$; R_1, R_2 and R_3 each independently represent a

hydrogen atom or a substituent; and R represents a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an aliphatic group, an aryl group or a heterocyclic group.

16. An image forming method according to claim 15, wherein R is an alkyl group.

17. An image forming method according to claim 15, wherein at least one of X_1, X_2 and X_3 is Br.

18. An image forming method according to claim 15, wherein Y_1 is -N(R_1)-.

19. An image forming method according to claim 18, wherein R_1 is an alkyl group.

20. An image forming method according to claim 15, wherein Y_2 is -N(R_1)-.

21. An image forming method according to claim 20, wherein R_1 is a hydrogen atom.

22. An image forming method according to claim 15, wherein Y_3 is a single bond.

23. An image forming method according to claim 15, wherein n2 represents 2.

24. An image forming method according to claim 15, wherein R and R_1, or R and R_3 form a ring.

25. An image forming method according to claim 24, wherein the ring is an alicyclic group.

26. An image forming method according to claim 15, wherein the line speed of the thermal development is 24

mm/sec or higher.

27. An image forming method according to claim 15, wherein the line speed of the thermal development is 28 mm/sec or higher.

28. An image forming method according to claim 15, wherein a development efficiency at a maximum density part is 70% or more.

29. An image forming method according to claim 15, wherein a hue-angle of the image at an optical density of 1.0 is from 180° to 270°.

30. An image forming method comprising thermally developing a photothermographic material comprising a photosensitive silver halide, a non-photosensitive organic silver salt, a reducing agent and a binder on at least one surface of a support and comprising at least one compound selected from compounds represented by the following formulae (1a), (1b) and (1c), with an interval time of 12 seconds or less:

Formula (1a)

$R\text{-}Y_1\text{-}(L_1)_{n1}\text{-}CX_1X_2X_3$

wherein, X_1, X_2 and X_3 each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a substituent, provided that at least one of X_1, X_2 and X_3 is a halogen atom; L_1 represents a sulfonyl group; n1 represents 0 or 1; Y_1 represents $-N(R_1)-$, a sulfur atom, an oxygen atom, a selenium atom,

or $-(R_2)C=C(R_3)-$; R_1, R_2 and R_3 each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a substituent; and R represents a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an aliphatic group, an aryl group or a heterocyclic group;

Formula (1b)

$R-Y_2-L_2-CX_1X_2X_3$

wherein, X_1, X_2 and X_3 each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a substituent, provided that at least one of X_1, X_2 and X_3 is a halogen atom; L_2 represents a carbonyl group or a sulfinyl group; Y_2 represents $-N(R_1)-$, a sulfur atom, an oxygen atom, a selenium atom, or $-(R_2)C=C(R_3)-$; R_1, R_2 and R_3 each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a substituent; and R represents a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an aliphatic group, an aryl group or a heterocyclic group; and

Formula (1c)

$R-Y_3-(L_3)_{n2}-CX_1X_2X_3$

wherein, X_1, X_2 and X_3 each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a substituent, provided that at least one of X_1, X_2 and X_3 is a halogen atom; L_3 represents a sulfonyl group, a carbonyl group or a sulfinyl group; n2 represents 2 or 3; Y_3 represents a single bond, $-N(R_1)-$, a sulfur atom, an oxygen atom, a selenium atom, or $-(R_2)C=C(R_3)-$; R_1, R_2 and R_3 each independently represent a hydrogen atom or a substituent; and R represents a

hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an aliphatic group, an aryl group or a heterocyclic group.

31. An image forming method according to claim 30, wherein the interval time is 10 seconds or less.

32. An image forming method according to claim 30, wherein a hue-angle of the image at an optical density of 1.0 is from 180° to 270°.

33. An image forming method according to claim 30, wherein the photothermographic material has a silver coating amount of 1.0 g/m^2 to 1.9 g/m^2.

34. An image forming method according to claim 30, wherein thermal development is carried out for 6 seconds to 14 seconds.

35. An image forming method according to claim 30, wherein a development efficiency at a maximum density part is 70% or more.